Tootsie's Husband

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

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By W. A. STIGLER

Author of

"Son John" "The Greater Love" "America"
"The Touch Divine"

The Southern
Dramatic Company
CANADIAN, TEXAS

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FOREWORD

The author of this play has been a public school man for a number of years. He was led to take up the writing of plays by reason of the fact that he found it almost impossible to secure a play suited to production by the average high school class. Plays of the Shakespearean type are not practicable, and yet, something more elevating than the ordinary play for amateurs is desired. It is hoped that this play falls within the happy medium, and will, therefore, meet the demand.

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TIME: PRESENT

COSTUMES: MODERN

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Tootsie's Husband

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By W. A. STIGLER

Author of

"SON JOHN" and "THE GREATER LOVE"

CAST:

Leonard Furman ---------- His "Tootsie's" Husband
W. L. Oxford ---------- Lawyer, Leonard's Boss
Toll Poyner ---------- In Oxford's Office
Dr. Clyde Wysong ---------- Woman Hater and Wife Stealer
Mr. Worthmore ---------- Jealous of his Wife's Cousin
Bessir ---------- Piano Mover
Mrs. Bessie Furman ---------- Afflicted with Nerves
Kitty Sheppard ---------- Her Friend
Mrs. Worthmore ---------- Worthmore's Young Wife
Mrs. Ives ---------- Mrs. Furman's Dressmaker
Mrs. Moore ---------- Suing the Railway Company
Mrs. Truebelle ---------- As her Name Indicates
Mrs. Kleberg ---------- A Parasite on Society
Mrs. Oleson ---------- Another Bessir.

ACT I.

SCENE: W. L. Oxford's prosperous law office. Table at center, desk right with typewriter and desk phone. Also desk at left. Desk phone on table at center. Book cases and books.

Leonard Furman discovered seated at desk at right. Telephone rings and he answers.

FURMAN. W. L. Oxford's office. *** This is Leonard Furman speaking. Oh, is that you, precious! I was wondering why you hadn't phoned.***No, I was just looking thru some books for some material on a case. *** No, no mail except a few— *** Well, you know this is the first of the month. ***Not so bad, I guess. You see I get my salary today, too. ***Why, I don't know,

Tootsie. Don't you remember we said we were going to begin to try to save this month? *** ah yes *** uhuh ***yes *** uhuh uhuh *** well, ah *** you see ***uhuh *** yes, but precious * * yes * * uhuh *** uhuh *** but—yes, yes, I see* * uhuh *** (Writing) Six yards, white *** Those two rockers? Don't you think we can make out another month? Yes *** uhuh *** I don't know, but *** uhuh *** oh, yes, sure, but don't you think we can do with one? Yes *** uhuh *** Oh, sure ***Oh, goodness, precious, don't say that. You know I couldn't have my Tootsie feeling that way ***Sure, I'll do it. All right, good bye, dearie. (Hangs up receiver with a deep sigh.)

(Enter Oxford left. He is smoking a cigar. He removes hat, places it on rack, and takes his place at table at center without noticing Leonard. He looks thru mail on table.)

OXFORD. (Brusquely) Is this today's mail, Leonard?

LEONARD. No, I answered all but a few personals there. Here are a few replies with checks for you to sign. (Brings papers, then goes back to his desk.)

OXFORD. Oh, the first again. Pay day for you, too, isn't it?

LEONARD. (Apparently hard at work) Let's see: yes, I believe it is.

OXFORD. Well, here's a little surprise for you. (Handing check.)

LEONARD. (Examining check) A raise in salary—thank you, sir. I surely appreciate it, and hope I deserve it. This will help us so much!

OXFORD. The H. C. L. shouldn't bother you, Leonard, that is, if you practice economy.

LEONARD. (Answering phone which has just rung) Oxford's office, Leonard Furman speaking. Did you wish to speak to Mr. Oxford? Oh, yes, take them to 1312 Oak Street. Good bye.

OXFORD. Hmm! Living there now, Leonard? That's a pretty swell part of the city, isn't it? Must be pretty expensive

LEONARD. Pretty. But it was just too much to keep her cooped up where we were, you know. She simply never got to see anyone or go anywhere.

OXFORD. Hmm! Sometimes a start in life is worth a great deal more than a good stand-in with society.

LEONARD. Oh, we are going to save now, and accumulate something. And now, with this increase in sal— ***

OXFORD. Uh, you'd better remember that salary increases don't continue indefinitely. I'd think you'd find it an uphill busi-

ness trying to save in that community with all those millionaires! Whew! It will be many a day before I can afford that!

LEONARD. But we were fortunate to get that beautiful little home, and so reasonably, too.

OXFORD. The very reason I am without a partner today is because Merrill's wife went wild over society and got him to go to Chicago where there is the real dope. And now, I venture to say, they're barely making ends meet. Better go slow, young man.

LEONARD. Well, you know one must keep up one's social standing. (As tho reciting) One has a duty toward one's fellow man which one must live up to.

OXFORD. Yeaah, but one's "social obligations" end when he gets out of funds. And (mimicking) one's salary can't go up every time one's wife wants a new gown or wants to give a thousand dollar ball.

FURMAN. Oh, I almost forgot to tell you! Mr. Churchwell came to the door just before you came in and asked that you step across the hall to his office just as soon as you arrived. He has a prospective client for you that he wants you to meet. (Exit Oxford right.)

(Furman works at desk. Enter Toll Poyner right. He is smoking and has his cap tilted to one side. He takes his seat at desk at left, lip curled in a cynical way.)

FURMAN. (Turning his head) You are late again, Mr. Poyner.

POYNER. (Cuttingly) Thank you. Did you read it in the papers?

FURMAN. Read what?

POYNER. That I am late. I judge that you thought it was news to me, else you would not have taken the trouble to tell me.

FURMAN. I am sure that Mr. Oxford, our employer, will not approve of your being late so often.

POYNER. I should worry! Office help is pretty scarce now. You see I was breakfasting with my girl who is visiting this burg.

FURMAN. Mr. Poyner, you ought to get married and settle down.

POYNER. Again I thank you. You are the shining example of the model husband and happily married man, I suppose.

FURMAN. (Not heeding his cut) And give more attention to your employer's business and less to the girls, and I am sure

you'd rise faster.

POYNER. I am overwhelmed with gratitude for your kindness in giving me so much good advice! The trouble with free advice is that the person who usually gives it has done nothing himself and his advice has no weight to it.

FURMAN. The world today needs strong men—men of character.

POYNER. And once more, I suppose YOU are the example! Eh? Here you've been toiling ten long hours a day for four years under this boss and now you are holding down the same job. He doesn't appreciate your overtime, I tell you.

FURMAN. I would rather you would not talk slightingly about our employer in my presence. I am sure he pays us all we earn.

POYNER. Humph! Now let me give you a little common sense in with all your advice. There is no way of subsidizing a man's overtime; employers don't figure on it. They expect men to do just as little as they can and get by with it, and they figure their business accordingly.

FURMAN. You are only pessimistic. You would have a different outlook on life if you would only get you a helpful, tender, loving, cheerful little wife.

POYNER. There aint no such thing! And don't try to pull that old stuff on me about two living as cheaply as one. I know because my purse is so empty it's almost wrong side out since OUR breakfast together.

FURMAN. You need a quiet little helpmate who could teach you to save. (Phone at right rings and Furman takes down receiver.) Oxford's office, Furman speaking. Oh, that you, dearie! Yes, she's been over to see me, but listen, we don't—it's quite a large account. Well, if she won't sew for you any more without its being paid, just get someone else. *** Oh, I am sure you can find another as good. Well, what if it does take time? You don't need any new dresses for awhile, do you? (Trying to speak so Poyner cannot hear) I am sure we can't afford *** Well, she's an old friend, and you won't need new things for her. You know, dearie, we'll simply have to save—what! *** uhuh *** yes *** uhuh *** but, dearie, *** uhuh ***yes, I know, but *** no * *uhuh * * but, dearie *** uhuh *** yes, I know, but * * no *** uhuh *** Oh, no, now, sweet, don't think that way *** You know I'm not like that! That'll be all right, I'll manage it for you. *** Sure *** Now cheer up. Good bye, Sweetie. Yes, I'll

hurry home. Good bye! (Returns receiver to its hook with sigh.)

POYNER. (Who was indifferent at first, but who had gradually craned his neck, open-mouthed, sneeringly) Helpful, tender, loving, cheerful *** Ideal!!

FURMAN. (After a pause, recovering himself) There are some important letters which Mr. Oxford wished to get off at once. Will you please take them down?

POYNER. Sure! Glad of the chance! Maybe I'll strike a pretty skirt on the street—while you, Mr. Ideal Husband and Employe, stay in your nest! (Exit left.)

FURMAN. (Taking down phone receiver) Alamo 1213. **** Say, dearie, I forgot to tell you just now some good news. Bet you can't guess what it is. Yes, $30.00. You were right. He did give it without my asking for it. *** Sure you can now. Try to have something nice for her, too. Well, good bye, Tootsie, someone's at the door. (Hangs up receiver and admits Mrs. Ives, left)

MRS. IVES. This is Mrs. Ives, your wife's dressmaker again. You told me to present the bill when you had more time ***

FURMAN. Yes, yes, now let's see, what did you say was the amount of the bill?

MRS. IVES. For both months, $325.

FURMAN. Why, er, madam, I—there must be some mistake. Do you have an itemized statement? I shall have to have my wife O. K. it.

MRS. IVES. Pardon me, sir. But after I saw the way you acted when I called before, I expected something like this; and you will notice your wife's signature. Now if you'll give me a check— ***

OXFORD. (Inserting his head right) Leonard!

FURMAN. Yes, sir.

OXFORD. Step here a moment, please.

FURMAN. Excuse me a moment, please. (Exits right.)

(Mrs. Ives paces floor restlessly. Presently Oxford and Worthmore enter right. They sit at table in center and spread arms upon it.)

OXFORD. (To Mrs. Ives) Well, madam, something for you?

MRS. IVES. Yes. I am waiting to finish my interview with Mr. Furman.

OXFORD. Well, if you're in as big a hurry as you seem to be, you'd better come later. I put him to work on a task that he won't finish soon, and he'll not likely be back here for some time. (Holding door open, left) Good day! (Exit Mrs. Ives, left)

WORTHMORE. Mr. Oxford, I will state my case briefly. I have come to you because my friend, Mr. Churchwell, recommends you as the city's strongest lawyer. A short time ago I separated from my wife. I left Kansas City a few weeks ago to get her away from a young doctor named Wysong. And when I found that he had followed us here and was welcomed by her. I at once brot matters to a crisis. Before I realized her attachment for him I acquiesced to her entreaties and placed half a million dollars in her hands for the purpose, as she said, of speculating. Soon I suspected that it was to be invested at that scoundrel Wysong's, advice, and for his benefit.

OXFORD. How did you learn all this? Are you sure of it?

WORTHMORE. Of course. I don't make hasty decisions, and I never make a mistake. I learned it from a lady friend, our neighbor. (Walks floor nervously) Now I feel sure that they will try to speculate in some oil stocks, either in this place or in Ranger, Texas. Wysong's hog wild about oil. Now I want you to be on the ground at one place, and your partner, Mr. Merrill, at the other—

OXFORD. Pardon me, sir, but Mr. Merrill is no longer with me. He is in Chicago—

WORTHMORE. What's that! That's what you get by going on the other fellow's suggestion. Here I have gone and exposed my family skeleton to you and now you can't handle my case—

OXFORD. I beg your pardon, sir. I didn't say I couldn't handle your case. I merely said—

WORTHMORE. Yes. I know what you said. But I must have a firm of at least two competent men to handle my case, so that one of them can be at this place and the other at Ranger. We must be able to operate against them in either place and work together at the same time. (Reaching for his hat, nervously) But what's the use of wasting words? I must look elsewhere for two partners. Please say nothing of this—

OXFORD. But hold on—you misunderstand. I HAVE a partner—a—er—a very competent one. Just a moment. Please be seated. (Presses button. Leonard appears at right.) Mr. Worthmore, meet my new partner, Mr. Leonard Furman. Now—ah—ah—if you will go ahead with the statement of your case, I can explain later to Mr. Furman what you have already told me.

(Furman remains standing halfway behind Oxford's chair, mouth agape, not comprehending. Gradually it dawns upon him and he is overjoyed.)

WORTHMORE. (Slowly settling in his chair) As I have said, this cur, Wysong, is likely going to direct the investment of the money. But both of them are just likely to let some agent sell them a lease on a few thousand acres of as worthless stuff as that I bought yesterday from Hawkins, and pay the whole amount for it, too.

OXFORD. Ah, have a seat, Mr. Furman. This is a very important case which Mr. Worthmore is stating, and I think we can let our other business wait on it.

FURMAN. (Beginning to understand, sits) Yes sir.

OXFORD. It will likely take quite a bit of time to recover this money, Mr. Worthmore, and—

WORTHMORE. Recover? I haven't asked you to recover it, have I? All I am anxious for you to do is to prevent it from passing thru Wysong's devilish hands. It must not do THEM any good; that's all I am after.

OXFORD. And you are sure she will invest it here or in Ranger, are you?

WORTHMORE. I'm sure of it. I have letters which passed between them which will—

OXFORD. Have you communicated with a lawyer in Ranger?

WORTHMORE. Good heavens, no! Why, what do you think those two-by-four fellows could do? Why, even Wysong could outwit them!

OXFORD. Uhuh. And you want one of us to—

WORTHMORE. I want one of you to go there and the other to stay here, and I want you to learn enough about every holding in both places that you can get out an injunction and stop any investment she may try to make. Or you might get hold of some wildcat stuff for a little of nothing and unload it on them for the whole amount. The main thing is, keep them from making a profitable investment, and we can see about getting the money out of their hands later.

OXFORD. In which of these places do you think she is more likely to invest? Where is your wife—I mean the former Mrs. Worthmore—now?

WORTHMORE. They are both in Ranger right this minute, I think, and I want you to be there just as soon as you can, for they are looking for an inviting lease right now. If you succeed in this I'll pay you a hundred thousand dollars. Now, I must be going. I—

OXFORD. Just a minute. Where can I get in touch with this

lady friend who, you say, told you about Wysong and your wife?

WORTHMORE. 614 West 23d Street. By the way, complete that contract for that lease which I bought from Hawkins yesterday. (Handing papers) You will notice that my name is not in the contract. I am buying it in the name of L. T. Smith, as I don't want my name connected with this oil game.

OXFORD. (Examining papers) Uhuh. What is the amount you are paying for the lease?

WORTHMORE. A dollar an acre. two thousand acres. I am taking it in on an account, and I consider it a gift.

OXFORD. Hmmm. I saw a party the other day who said he'd like to get hold of this lease.

WORTHMORE. Well, if you see him again and he still wants it, sell it to him.

OXFORD. I'm not in that business, but I believe he'd pay a nice little sum for it.

WORTHMORE. He's crazy! But sell it to him, anyway. I'll give you half of whatever you get from it.

(Enter Mrs. Moore, left. She is carefully holding her right arms close to her side. She talks in high, nasal tone.)

MRS. MOORE. Mr. Oxford, I want you to file suit against the railroad company for me. The train started while I was a-helpin' my darter on it, and hurt my right arm. I think it's paralyzed. I can't raise it, or do anything with it. I—

OXFORD. Excuse me. My partner, Mr. Thurman, will handle your case. Ah, Mr. Worthmore, come over here (They sit at desk, left) while we fix up an agreement in this matter. It is rather unusual, you know ****(They write, and talk in low tone.)

MRS. MOORE. (To Furman, both seated at desk at right) I want you to sue 'em at once for $2,000. Oh, dear, I won't ever be able to write to my pore girl, and she's to be gone a whole month to see her aunt. What will—

FURMAN. Your name, please. (Writes)

MRS. MOORE. Mrs. Moore: Mrs. Ophelia Abigail Obediah Moore. I'm a poor widder woman and I have to make my livin' by hard work, and now I cain't even drive my car or make out my statements for my rent nor nuthin'—

FURMAN. When did this happen?

MRS. MOORE. Yistiddy mornin'. I was a-helpin' my little sixteen-year-old girl on the train to go to see her aunt that lives in the old states. Her aunt ain't seen her in such a long time and she's named fer her, too. And she'd been a-beggin' fer her to

come an' see her, and so I finally decided to let her do it. And the pore little thing was a-cryin' so hard to have to be gone so long from her old mother—

FURMAN. Now, if you'll please tell me just exactly how it happened—

MRS. MOORE. I was jist a-goin' ter tell my pore little girl good-bye, and there was a whole lot o' people a-crowdin' around behind us. So I jist caught a-hold of her by her arm and held her over the side of the first step with my left hand and was a-holdin' on to that there rod on the side of the car with my right hand this a-way (Demonstrating with right hand held high) until all of the people got on, and then I started to give her one last kiss, when the train started and jerked my arm so hard I ain't never been able to use it since..

FURMAN. (Catches hold of her arm and carefully lowers it, smiling. As she notices, she screams as though in pain.) I suggest that we put your arm in some kind of a bandage which will not let it move around so much until after the trial is over. I do not think that Mr. Oxford— (Catching himself) we could handle this case without a guaranteed fee, regardless of the outcome of the suit. Say, fifty dollars in advance.

MRS. MOORE. Goodness sakes! and I'm a pore widder woman and have to pay so much taxes! But I suppose I'll have to pay it. Be sure you win the suit. Here's the money. (Handing check or bills)

(Furman places fee on table and shows Mrs. Moore out, left. He then starts toward desk at right)

OXFORD. Have you any questions to ask Mr. Worthmore, Mr. Furman?

FURMAN. (Taken off his guard) Why, no sir—ah—er—Mr. Worthmore, did you talk with your wife about this before you—ah—put her away?

WORTHMORE. (Nervously) I should say not! I don't stoop to pleading my cause with anybody. Besides, I wasn't going to have her calling me jealous!

FURMAN. Hasn't she tried to talk with you at any time? (Oxford appears anxious for fear that Furman will spoil the case)

WORTHMORE. She tried it, and she wrote me letters, but I never received them. She came to my office, but she came only to mock me, for Wysong was with her at the time. Now, I must bid you good day, gentlemen. (Starts left)

OXFORD. I'll go down with you. I must make preparations to leave on that next train. (Giving Furman a knowing look) **You are careless with your fees,** Mr. Furman. (Hands Furman money from table and exits left with Worthmore.)

(Furman puts money in vest pocket, pinches himself, then sits and stares at ceiling. Finally, as tho just realizing, he goes to case at left, helps himself to Oxford's cigars, seats himself and puts feet on table in grandiloquent air. Soon the telephone rings, and he answers.)

FURMAN. This is Oxford and **Furman's** office. Yes, this is Furman speaking. *** But, madam, your rent was not due until yesterday, and I have been so busy I just haven't **** Oh, in advance? Well, of course I didn't know that. *** So just pay for two months now? ***** Gone up? *** Oh, just ten dollars more? All right. *** All right. Good bye.

(He lays aside cigar, goes to desk at right and begins work. Enter Mesdames Furman, Truebelle, Kelberg, and Oleson, left.)

MRS. FURMAN. Come in, ladies. There he is, busy as usual. He simply grinds away from daylight till dark. Look, dearie, who are here!

FURMAN. (Rising) Glad to see you, ladies! Have seats.

MRS. FURMAN. We are on our way to meet Kitty. Her train will be in soon. And I had to come by for a minute to tell you I am planning a little afternoon party for her, so she can get acquainted. We will need to get some things and I wanted to kow what we'll be able to—you see, ladies, we are poor folks, and have to consider expense.

MRS. OLESON. Yes, things are dreadfully high nowadays, but one has to live—

MRS. TRUEBELLE. And wear clothes—

FURMAN. Now, wifey, I have something good to tell you. I have just been made Mr. Oxford's partner!

MRS. FURMAN. His partner! Oh, fine! Now I can do what I have been dreaming of for so long—get that swell piano at Harwell's.

MRS. KLEBERG. The swellest piano in the city! Won't that be too lovely for anything!

MRS. TRUEBELLE. I must say, dearie, you are showing taste! If you keep on planning, you are going to put on one of the daintiest little affairs of the day!

MRS. KLEBERG. She's a delightful entertainer!

MRS. OLESON. Artistic!

MRS. FURMAN. Oh! How kind of you to say that! But you know I could never have anything to compare with the lovely lawn parties you give or the yachting trips of Mrs. Kleberg and Mrs. Truebelle.

MRS. KLEBERG. All the same, you are making a better showing than anyone else who has come among us in the same length of time. At this rate you will soon be setting us all a pace.

MRS. FURMAN. But you know I never could hope to do that because—because—well, you know, our funds are limited.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. And your husband just made partner of the most prosperous man in the city?

MRS. FURMAN. I keep forgetting that! And is Mr. Oxford as famous as that, Leonard, dear? What does he look like? I want to see him.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Well, dears, we must be going, if we expect to get thru in time for lunch. Good day, Mr. Furman. Pleasant morning.

FURMAN. Thank you. Good morning. (Waving) Bye bye, tootsie. Get whatever you want. (Exit ladies, left.

(Furman seats himself at desk at right and works. Presently phone rings and he answers.)

FURMAN. Oxford's office, Furman speaking. Yes, this is Leonard Furman. Oh, the florist. **** For flowers—what flowers? **** Oh, I see. I suppose they're for this afternoon. ***what's the **** $45.00? **** Uhuh, sure, it's all right, if Mrs. Furman ordered them. Just send them around and send me the bill—next week. **** Well, you see, I'm thinking of leaving—ah—on the next train, and will not likely be back for a few days. Who am I? Why I am T. L. OXFORD'S NEW PARTNER! **** Oh, that's all right, no trouble at all. Good bye. (Hangs up receiver and sighs deeply.)

(Enter Oxford left. He goes to putting letters and papers in case as tho preparing to leave.)

OXFORD. Any new business?

FURMAN. No.

OXFORD. Hadn't the ladies who just entered the elevator been in? Mrs. Truebelle, Mrs. —

FURMAN. (Proudly) Oh, they were just in with my wife for a moment's call.

OXFORD. Uhuh. I'd think social obligations 'ud be pretty stiff with that set. Joyriding, yachting, parties, swell gowns, at present prices! (Whistles)

FURMAN. (As tho reciting.) But you know one must live, and wear clothes.

OXFORD. Uhuh. They MUST wear clothes, all right. But judging by the size of each, the bills cover more space than some of the modern dresses! You'd better have taken my advice and let 'em alone. Where's Poyner?

FURMAN. He's gone away to take those letters. He spoke something about being with a girl while he was—

OXFORD. Oh, darn! He'll be expecting a raise in salary next to help keep up HIS wife! Oh, by the way, Leonard, about that little affair with Mr. Worthmore. When I presented you as my new partner—of course you understood—

FURMAN. No, I don't understand it altogether. I thank you very much for your kindness, but I think we'd better have a full understanding at the beginning. Will our income be—divided—ah—equally—

OXFORD. OUR income, thunderation! I thought you'd know that this partnership business was a fake, for that case only, just to please that hot-headed Worthmore. And in reality your relation with me will be just the same as before. Understand?

FURMAN. (Almost overcome, reaches awkwardly behind him for support of table.) And I'll still be on a salary—

OXFORD. As before, Leonard, the same salary as before. (Leaves abruptly, left, bag in hand)

(Furman staggers to chair at right and sinks into it, staring. Phone rings and he takes down receiver.)

FURMAN. Oxford and Furman's—Oxford's office. *** This is Mr. Furman speaking. **** What milliner? *** What's the amount? **** Well, mail me a statement. **** But I won't be in this afternoon. **** Yes, I know it's past due, but I've been so busy. **** I won't have time to mail you a check. I'm leaving on this next train, besides— **** Yes, on this next train, I think. Just mail it—next week! (Returning receiver to hook and looking dazed)

(Enter Poyner left. He removes coat and places it on chair at desk at left, then sits and begins work.)

POYNER. Boss been in?

FURMAN. Yes. (Staring off right)

POYNER. In again, out again, eh?

FURMAN. Uhuh.

POYNER. Gettin' pretty spry in his old age, isn't he?

FURMAN. Uhuh.

POYNER. Did he stack up a lot of work for us?

FURMAN. Nah. (Thumping on desk with knuckles.)

POYNER. Anything doin', good or bad?

FURMAN. Nah.

POYNER. What's eatin' on you? Boss been aching about anything?

FURMAN. Mr. Poyner, our employer is, I feel quite sure, displeased that you give so much time to the ladies.

POYNER. Humph! He'd better get him some old fossil who is too feeble to go out with them, then—or, perhaps, ANOTHER MARRIED MAN!

FURMAN. Again I should say, Mr. Poyner, you ought to get married. Your present relations with the girls will only mean time, expense and worry to you.

(Phone at center rings, and Poyner answers.)

POYNER. Oxford's office. **** Yes, he's here. Mr. Furman, your WIFE wants to speak to you.

FURMAN. Thank you. (At phone trying not to let P. hear) Yes, dearie. *** Rugs? Why, aren't the ones we have all right? **** Oh, to match the new piano? Then we'd better not get the piano. ***Already sent? *** Well, we'll just have to make out with them any way, because we can't afford— **** Well, you see, that partnershp didn't mean just what I thought it would **** Now, listen, pet, we just must begin to try to save ***What? *** uhuh *** yes *** but pet— *** Oh, yes, sure— *** uhuh—Oh, don't think that! don't say that about me. You know I— **** Well, can't we make out with one? ****Oh, yes, for the guest room ***uhuh *** yes, but—but you see *** uhuh ***yes, but precious ***uhuh *** all right, now say something sweet **** thank you. Good bye, tootsie.

POYNER. Ahem!!! Ahem!!!

(Phone at desk at right rings and Furman, seated, answers.)

FURMAN. Mr. Furman speaking *** Yes, Mrs. Ives? **** I prefer that you present that statement next week sometime. I am very busy just now. *** Yes, I know it will just take a minute but I can't spare the minute. **** Well, you needn't call this afternoon, for I'll likely be out of town. *** Be away several days. *** It is not my custom to mail out checks. *** Well, go ahead and make them for her. You'll get your money, all right. **** But Mrs. Ives, that bill didn't come to my attention until to-day or it would have been paid. *** Yes *** well ****

(Phone at table, center, rings and Poyner answers.)

POYNER. Hello. **** All right. (To Fuman) Your cheerful, helpful, saving little wife wants to speak to you.

FURMAN. Yes, Mrs. Ives. **** (To Poyner) Tell her to call again in a few minutes. *** But, Mrs. Ives, it is such a small amount, why should you worry?

POYNER (Holding phone toward Furman) She says it's very important. (Gives phone, then sits left, gradually turning and staring at Furman)

FURMAN. (Still holding right phone in right hand and its receiver to his left ear, pushes his chair back and puts phone on each knee, the receiver of the phone at left in his right hand to his right ear, receiver cords crossed in front of his face. As he talks into one phone he tries to cover mouthpiece of other. In left phone) Yes, precious *** Can't we borrow that? Surely some of our neighbors have punch bowls. (To right phone) I would, only I tell you I just can't get to it. (To left phone) I know they don't borrow, but you could tell them you forgot to get one till too late. *** (Right phone) But Mrs. Ives **** (Gets phones mixed. To phone right) Now, listen, sweetness *** (To left phone) I don't care to take more time in discussing this. *** (To phone right) Good gracious, I'm not trying to get fresh with you! (To left phone) Oh, darling, don't say that about me. You know I'm not brutal to you—you *** (To phone right) You can have anything you want, precious. (To phone left) I'm not trying to start anything with you, but I positively will not consider the matter now *** (To phone right) Now, Tootsie, of course you can have it if you want it *** (Sees he has phones mixed, changes receivers. In phone left) Listen, darling, let me explain. I— (To phone right) I owe you an explanation. I thought I was talking to my wife **** (In phone left) Tootsie, I thought I was talking to Mrs. Ives *** (Both phones at mouth at same time) Yes, you're right. I am crazy as a loon! (Puts receiver of each phone to transmitter of other) Rage, foul fiends, RAGE!!! (Tears his hair)

(Poyner laughs heartily)

CURTAIN

ACT II

(Sitting room of Furman's home. Usual furniture of modern home. The guests present for the little party are Mesdames Kleberg and Truebelle, Dr. Wysong, and Kitty. Others may be used if it is felt advisable.)

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, why don't they come on? I know it is going to be a failure.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Now, don't be impatient, dear It is just a characteristic of our modern life that everyone is too busy to heed all the demands made upon his time.

MRS. FURMAN. But it seems that they could have given just a few minutes' time to my party—I know they could. They're just staying away because they think I—

MRS. KLEBERG. My dear Mrs. Furman! you are coming to the wrong conclusion! You are nervous because this is your first little affair among us.

MRS. FURMAN. No, they are not coming. or else they're going to be late only to show contempt for me because we—

KITTY. Don't worry, please. I shall have other opportunities to meet them. We'll be going out with them many times.

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, if they do not come on time this afternoon I shall never try to have another thing!

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Please don't worry. Maybe they will all be here in plenty of time. It is only two minutes late of the time set. Then, if they do not come at all —

MRS. FURMAN. They have not called me and explained, or anything.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. If you don't hear from them at all, what of it? It is just as I tell you: people are so rushed they cannot meet all obligations. Am I not right, Dr. Wysong?

DR. WYSONG. Quite right, ladies. It is about getting to where a fellow feels that he hasn't time to lie down before it is time to get up; to get up before it is time to retire; to go to work before it is time to go home; to kiss his girl before she's an old maid; to quarrel with his wife before it is time to make up again, or to brush his hair before it is all gone.

"I just haven't the time," is the common excuse
Of the modern man of today.
For our every fault it is put into use,
And it never falls by the way.

If you ask the young lad with the tousled up hair
And the dirt on his hands and his face
And the soiled pantaloons with their huge, gaping tear
Which was made as he slid to a base—
If you ask him, I say, as he comes to his lunch,
Why he didn't remove all the grime,

He will only just grin as he gives you this hunch:
"Well, I would, but I didn't have time."

When you happen to meet on your way home from church
Some good brother whose pew was not filled,
And you see as you pass, and his car gives a lurch,
Some nice fish in the rear seat are spilled,
And you ask him next day why he didn't come out,
He replies—Oh! is lying a crime!—
That he would have been found with the faithful few,
But he simply hadn't the time.

We just haven't the time for reading the news
Or for keeping ourselves uptodate,
And we haven't the time for having the blues
Or for worrying over our fate;
We just haven't the time to spend with our friends,
Or to know our own families;
To enjoy the warmth their society lends
In harmonious sympathies.

We have come to consider our business a bore
And production the other man's care.
We're consuming today as never before,
And producing less than our share.
And I think that we'll say with our last dying breath—
Oh, then may the peace-bells chime!—
That we should have considered preparing for death,
But we simply hadn't the time.

KITTY. Still poetic as ever, I see, Doctor Wysong.

MRS. FURMAN. Why, Kitty, I didn't know that you and Doctor Wysong had met before. You didn't tell me when I presented you today.

KITTY. Oh, yes he and I were in high school together. He was our class poet. But here come some more of your tardy guests.

(Mrs. Furman goes to left and admits Mrs. Oleson and Mrs. Worthmore.)

MRS. FURMAN. Mrs. Oleson, meet my friend, Miss Kitty Sheppard.

MRS. OLESON. Charmed to meet you, Miss Sheppard.

KITTY. Thank you. The pleasure is mutual.

MRS. FURMAN. And, Kitty, meet Mrs. Worthmore.

KITTY. How do you do, Mrs. Worthmore.

MRS. WORTHMORE. I'm delighted to know you.

MRS. OLESON. Dr. Wysong, knowing your dislike for married folks, I am surprised to see you the only male member of the group of this kind.

DR. WYSONG. Don't rub it in, please. I've just been sitting here cussing my luck and planning how I would get it back on those fellows who have left me to hold the sack today— Ah, I mean, I have just been congratulating myself on having found such a delightful group of ladies.

KITTY. Cynical, yet gallant as ever, I see, Clyde—Dr. Wysong.

MRS. FURMAN. If you keep on I'm going to think you and Doctor Wysong are VERY well acquainted. You see, at Mrs. Worthmore's suggestion I invited Dr. Wysong over to help entertain my friend, only to find that they are good friends!—so good that I sense a little romance.

MRS. OLESON. How charming!

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Stunning!

MRS. KLEBERG. Delightful!

DR. WYSONG. (Under his breath) Yes, about as stunning as a German gas attack.

MRS. FURMAN. I beg your pardon, Doctor, I did not understand.

DR. WYSONG. I thank you, ladies, for your kind wishes, and especially for your INTEREST.

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, everything is so distressing! Some of our guests not coming; our piano not yet arrived so that we can enjoy Miss Sheppard's singing; then, my husband not here!

MRS. KLEBERG. I'm sure your husband must be very busy indeed.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. He must be completely submerged in work.

(Maid appears center.)

MAID. Doctor Wysong wanted at the phone.

DOCTOR WYSONG. Excuse me, please. (Exit center with maid)

MRS. OLESON. Yes, I should think he would be busy, having been made the partner of a man like Judge Oxford, and having all the business left on his hands the first day!

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, Leonard is used to that. He very often

has charge of everything while Mr. Oxford is away.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. He's competent to handle it if anyone is. He's the shrewdest young lawyer in the state.

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, thank you! You are so kind to me.

(Enter Leonard left. He is completely worn out and dazed)

LEONARD. Good evening, everybody.

MRS. KLEBERG. Good afternoon, Mr. Furman.

MRS. FURMAN. You are late, Leonard, dear.

MRS. OLESON. Yes, you are neglecting your social life for your increasing business. That's just the way with our American men!

MRS. TRUEBELLE. We were just discussing your wonderful success!

FURMAN. Yes, it blew both fuses.

MRS. OLESON. What fuses?

FURMAN. Telephone; almost melted the wire.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Observe how modest he is—trying to put us on the wrong track!

MRS. OLESON. You must tell us all about your plans; we're so proud for you!

MRS. FURMAN. Let's just wait and he can tell us while we are having punch together. We'll go as soon as Doctor is thru phoning.

KITTY. You folks just go ahead. I'll wait for him.

MRS. KLEBERG. (Winking at others) Oh; how kind of you, Miss Sheppard; surely, we will leave you ALONE!

KITTY. Now, Mrs. Kleberg!

(Exit all but Kitty, left. She goes to left front and toys with flower in vase. Enter Dr. Wysong center. He goes toward her, but stops at center with arms folded.)

DOCTOR. Well, Kitty, where are the old hens?

KITTY. I want to have a talk with you, Clyde. Why are you bitter against these women? Are you that way about all of them, or just married ones?

DOCTOR. They're a pretty bad lot, Kit. I haven't anything to say against a woman who is domestic enough to make a home and raise a family. But it has got to where so many of them spend their time in idle foppery, doing nothing—pure parasites, living on their husbands' incomes, earned many times by overwork and overstrain. I tell you, the self-indulgence of such painted parasites is the greatest factor in bringing Bolshevism.

KITTY. And what have you to say about the unmarried?

DOCTOR. Oh, they'll all likely fall in with the rest.

KITTY. I am very sorry, Clyde, to see you grown so cynical toward the fairer sex. There is good in all this which you do not see.

DOCTOR. You are right. If it is there, I DON'T SEE IT.

KITTY. These women you so strongly condemn are really doing a great service. They are creating a society which meets the demands of those whose lives are crowded together—and they are no more artificial than the circumstances of their lives have made them.

DOCTOR. I must confess that I have never been able to see it.

KITTY. No, because you look only upon the arificial exterior, and do not see the warm blood coursing beneath. When brought to the vital test, they are over flowing with loving-kindness and the instinct of womanhood is warm beneath.

DOCTOR. Been studying law, Kit?

KITTY. No. Why?

DOCTOR. Thought you were PRACTICING law the way you defended that case.

KITTY. I see you do not take my words seriously, so we will join the others—

DOCTOR. Just one word, Kitty. I am taking this seriously insofar as you are concerned. It is a wholesome person who can see a great deal of good in others.

KITTY. I wish you would do so! I never thought you would be narrow about anything, Clyde. We are always judging other people's ways by our own standards. That society which is less formal than what we are accustomed to is crude; that which is more formal we call artificial, foppish. Each person is his own ideal. Take the matter of dress: if one dresses more cheaply than we, he is a rube; if one dresses more expensively, we call him wasteful, self-centered, dudish. (Pause) What got you started in this way of looking at things, Clyde?

DOCTOR. I'm sure it would not interest you. Let's dismiss the subject.

KITTY. No. I'm interested. I insist. Please tell me, for old times' sake.

DOCTOR. It was in the old time that it occurred. You, yourself, were the one who taught me the shallowness of a girl's heart. Of course, our youthful pledge meant little to you. But when I stood at the place where we had planned to have our last good bye before you went away, only to have you drive by

without stopping and laugh in my face—but, what's the use?

(Enter Bessir, left, pushing nice piano, followed by others.)

MAID. Yes, right there in the corner to the left. There, that will do.

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, thank goodness, it has come at last! (Exit maid, right) Now, Kitty, we'll forgive you for not joining us at punch if you will favor us with one of those lovely solos.

BESSIR. (At extreme left, holding out his hand to Furman, who is standing next to him) The first check on the piano. Can I see Mr. Furman?

FURMAN. (Dazedly) Yes, my dear sir. You see him now, front view. Now, (turning sidewise) profile. (Turning his back and starting off right) now, rear view. Good day—

MRS. WORTHMORE. (Reaching his side) Mr. Furman, I want to speak a word with you. (They sit at right front. Kitty and Dr. Wysong join others at left rear and they all converse in low tones. Bessir crosses over and holds hand in front of Furman's face. He tries not to notice it.) I hate to talk business with you at this time, but you seem so busy that it seems to be my only chance. I have a very important case, and it appears that you are the one most capable of handling it. When can I have an interview with you?

FURMAN. I don't know how long Mr. Oxford will be away—

MRS. WORTH. But I want you to handle it right away. I was afraid you'd be too busy! May I not have an interview with you soon—this evening?

FURMAN. (Remembering, and assuming dignified pose) Yes. Be over at five-thirty.

MRS. WORTH. Oh, thank you!

MRS. FURMAN. Now we will be favored with a song by Kitty.

KITTY. (Either she or another plays the piano while she sings. This song is sung to the tune of the chorus of "Love's Old Sweet Song")

I had long adored you as one enthroned afar,
Beaming silver brightly on me like a star
'Till you passed men when you thought I did not see;
And you smiled and kissed your (sweet) little hand to me.

Just this page from mem'ry when my end is near
Will of all life's treasures seem to me most dear;

Though the end be lonely and no friends are nigh,
Still, for this page only will my soul (yet) cry.

ALL. (Clapping hands) Fine!

MRS. FURMAN. Your voice grows sweeter every day, Kitty!

KITTY. Thank you.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. And what a pretty song!

MRS. OLESON. Such pleasing sentiment.

MRS. KLEBERG. So delicate!

BESSIR. (Who has been holding out his hand to Furman for money) Now, will you kindly settle for the first payment on dot piano?

FURMAN. Call at my office tomorrow—

BESSIR. Himmel no! I come mit dot piano for my money and I go not away till I get it.

(Others seem embarrassed. Furman is distrait.)

FURMAN. I haven't got my check book. See me later.

BESSIR. I got all kinds of checks. Vot kind you want?

MRS. FURMAN. (Almost fainting) Why, Leonard, please hurry and give him a check and let's close this oppressive interview.

FURMAN. But, darling, I can't—

BESSIR. Himmel! Vy have it sent over, then? I must take it back to my store at once!

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, Leonard! (Starts to rise hurriedly, and swoons with a cultured little scream.)

FURMAN. Oh, Tootsie! Dr. Wysong, treat her at once! Hurry!

DOCTOR. Some water. (Maid brings it and he bathes her face.)

FURMAN. (Feeling in his vest pocket finds the check received from Mrs. Moore) How much is that payment?

BESSIR. Fifty dollars down.

FURMAN. (Handing check) Here! Now, (Holding open door, left) please. Good day!

MRS. FURMAN. (Recovering in time to see Furman hand check) Leonard! You really had the money all the time?

FURMAN. Why—ah—of course, Tootsie. Just a mere trifle.

MRS. FURMAN. And you had it all the time and just did that to disgrace me! (The same little scream)

DOCTOR. Let me keep her quiet for a few moments and she'll be all right. (Assists her out, right)

MRS. OLESON. We must be going, really! We've had such a delightful time, Mr. Furman.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Yes! And we hope your wife soon recovers.

MRS. KLEBERG. A lovely afternoon, Mr. Furman! Good day.

FURMAN. Good day! (Exit all three, left)

MRS. WORTHMORE. I have had a wonderful day, Mr. Furman. And you may look for me at your office at five-thirty this evening. Good day. (Exit left. Furman exits right, hurriedly.)

(Kitty sits at piano, left, and plays and sings softly the song given above. Presently Dr. Wysong enters from right. He hears the song through)

DOCTOR. Do you remember where you got the words for that song?

KITTY. Yes. They were written by you—I suppose in an idle moment— the day before school closed—the last school we attended together.

DOCTOR. And you remembered them all this time?

KITTY. Yes. I know they meant nothing to you, but my heart has cherished them, somehow.

DOCTOR. Of course, you were innocent as a lamb when you laughed my youthful love to scorn, weren't you? But, of course, you had an excuse.

KITTY. Yes, I had an excuse. I'm sure you do not care to hear it, but I believe it will cause you to think more kindly of women in general if you do listen to my story. (She plays softly as she speaks. Lights are turned low) Until the day before we went away six years ago I did not know why we were leaving. I was looking forward with anticipation to my last meeting with you as we had planned, when my mother came to me while I was reading your last sweet letter and told me that we were leaving our old home forever; that we had just lost everything we had; that, as I knew, my father's health was failing and she and I must support and care for him. She said that as they had been in the old home a long time, their pride would not let them speak to anyone about our misfortune and that we were leaving without explanation, even to our closest friends. I knew that you and I could never realize our dreams, but I knew, also, that if I told you our secret you would wait for me and happiness would never come to you. So I chose rather to have you think me fickle than to deprive you of happiness through your faithfulness to me.

DOCTOR. Kitty, I—

KITTY. At times it has been pretty hard. Mother was kept in all the time by father's bedside while I went to College in the mornings and worked for our sustenance in the afternoons and

evenings. Father lasted only a year, but the next year mother was taken ill and I finished my education chiefly by studying at home. Mother knew of our relations and she begged me to explain all to you; leave her with friends and come to you. But I would not listen to her.

DOCTOR. Kitty, why didn't you let me know of this, Why did you have me thinking of you as I have all these years?

KITTY. (As though not hearing) Just a year ago today she passed away. She smiled as she bade me good bye and said: "I am happy, now, my daughter, for I know that you will go to him and explain all and be happy. Go, now my darling, as I go to meet your father." (Pause) Being with and seeing so much suffering has tinged my life with sadness, so that I feel that I am no longer pleasing to the friends I made in earlier years. Yet, during all the time, the words which I just sang have rung in my heart and burst from my very soul in song, and, in singing them my pent up soul found outlet **** They didn't mean so much to you—

DOCTOR. My God, Kitty! Didn't mean much to me!— (Taking her in his arms) My broken little flower, come to the arms that have longed all these years to feel your presence, within their clasp!

KITTY. Sh-h-h-h! They're coming! (They exit left)

MRS. FURMAN. (Off right) Now Leonard you—Oh, be careful! (They enter right. He is supporting her and assists her to seat at right.) You will have to be mighty good to me now, Leonard. Doctor Wysong says it's my nerves and that any shock or disturbance may prove fatal.

FURMAN. Yes, Tootsie. Don't Worry. Of course I'll be good to my little wifey.

MRS. FURMAN. (Affectedly) Oh, Leonard! how could you have such little feeling? You did that just to humiliate me!

FURMAN. Oh, no, Tootsie! Don't think that of me! You know I didn't—you know I'm not that heartless—

MRS. FURMAN. (Sighing deeply) I guess I'll live over it. Where are all the guests?

FURMAN. They have all gone, thank God!

Mre. FURMAN. What's that? Oh! Is that the way you feel about your little wife's friends?

FURMAN. I didn't mean that. I meant—well, they said that they were sorry to go, but it was growing late—and they wished you might get all right soon.

MRS. FURMAN. You see! I almost collapsed again. You are going to have to be very good to me now.

FURMAN. Yes, Tootsie. We'll keep everything so quiet—won't have anything to disturb or shock you. We'll just stay at home and take good care of you.

MRS. FUURMAN. Oh! that would ruin my nerves completely! I must have diversion. We must have excursions, boating trips, and car drives to the country. We'll have to go to the country for the summer now, like the Klebergs and Olesons do.

FURMAN. But, Tootsie! Where will we get the money for all that? Don't you think we had better begin to try to save a little——?

MRS. FURMAN. (Peevishly) Now, Leonard, I expected you to do just like all other men—go and get selfish. If I had a little wife who was suffering so much with her nerves, I'm sure I'd see that she had everything possible to help her.

FURMAN. But we haven't the—where will we get the money?

MRS. FURMAN. Where will we get the money, indeed! You just made the partner of the most prosperous man in the city!

FURMAN. But, you see, Tootsie, that partnership didn't mean exactly—

MRS. FURMAN. (Excitedly) Oh, don't go to putting up so many excuses, please! It won't be necessary. (Sighing resignedly) Well, that's all right. Just let it go, and don't think any more about it. I'll just stay here all cooped up at home like you want me to, and not ever go in society again, and maybe—and then—I'll— (crying) then the end will come soon and you won't have me for a burden any more—

FURMAN. (Interrupting by falling on his knees) Now, Tootsie, dearie, don't talk that way! Oh, please don't! Don't look that way! Don't think that about me! You know I'm not that way! (Petting her) Of course my uittle Tootsums can have anything her wants. Her can have all the trips on the water and joyrides and trips to the mountains her wants—just anything, only please give her old, mean, ugly, hateful, selfish, cruel hubby one little smile!

CURTAIN

ACT III.

(Oxford's office as in act I. Poyner, seated at his desk, at left, at work. Enter Furman, left.)

POYNER. Been out larking, have you?

FURMAN. (Slumps into seat at right) Uhuh.

POYNER. This society business is taking quite a bit of your time, even if you are an old married head.

FURMAN. Uhuh.

POYNER. Well, twenty minutes until five o'clock. Then it's me for home!

FURMAN. Work with your eye on the clock, don't you, Mr. Poyner?

POYNER. Yep. I'm paid for eight hours per day and I work that much and quit.

FURMAN. If you had a word half finished when you were writing on the typewriter at the time the clock struck, I believe you'd wait until the next day to finish it.

POYNER. Exactly. And I'm sure your eagle eye has discovered another thing about me: If I am in my chair at one minute till eight in the morning, I wait until she's straight up before I begin work. Now, here you are, planning to work several hours overtime as you usually do, and what will it bring you? Not one cent more, and not even the appreciation of the boss.

FURMAN. I'm sure that Mr. Oxford, our employer, appreciates fully everything we do for him, even though he does not often have time to express himself toward us.

POYNER. Doesn't have TIME to express it? Why, it doesn't take one second more time to write a check for two hundred than it does to write one for one hundred dollars. I don't give a darn for his TELLING me that he appreciates me. A bigger check is all the expression I want.

FURMAN. I'm sure you'll not get it soon unless you show yourself willing to earn more. The trouble with people today is that they are all wanting to increase their income without enlarging their earning capacity.

POYNER. Humph! It's a cinch that if I began working overtime on my present salary, the boss 'ud never raise me a cent. He's no fool, and why should he raise me, if he can get all I can do for the amount he is now paying me?

FURMAN. (Taking papers from desk and putting on his hat) If a lady calls for me, please tell her to wait.

POYNER. My dear Mr. Furman! (Mimicking Leonard) I'm sure you are giving too much time to the ladies!

FURMAN. (Not heeding) Tell her that I shall be back soon. (Exit left. Poyner looks over papers and whistles. He finds an

interesting one and leans back, putting his feet upon a chair or his desk. He tilts his cigar so that the burning end almost touches his nose. Enter Mesdames Furman, Truebelle, Oleson, and Kleberg, left)

MRS. FURMAN. (Grandiloquently) Have seats, ladies. We shall have to wait awhile on Leonard, I suppose. He's so busy.

MRS. KLEBERG. He must be, handling such a large business, and alone at that!

MRS. FURMAN. (To Poyner, haughtily) I'm Mrs. Furman. Will your employer be in again soon?

POYNER. (Not looking up) Nope. Out of town.

MRS. FURMAN. What a rude fellow! I shall have Leonard discharge him unless he improves his manners. (Poyner makes grimaces.)

MRS. OLESON. I should think so, or at least teach him some courtesy!

MRS. FURMAN. You say he's out of town?

POYNER. (Snarling) Yep.

MRS. FURMAN. Why, he must have been called away very suddenly, or else he would have phoned me. (To Poyner) Did he leave any word here for me?

POYNER. Not on your tintype! The boss ain't strong on the ladies, especially the other fellow's worser half.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Why! How strangely he talks!

MRS. KLEBERG. Crude, indeed!

(Poyner groans)

MRS. FURMAN. I do hope he hasn't gone far and will be back on the next train. This will interfere so much with our plans. And we must have everything in readiness to start tomorrow.

MRS. OLESON. Yes. There is a storm predicted for the last of the week. And the last time we cruised across the bay for an outing we were caught in a pretty bad one. It isn't very pleasant, I tell you!

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, it must be a success! It must! But we shall just have to see Leonard and have him attend to the chartering of the yacht this afternoon and then get supplies and things.

MRS. OLESON. I happened to think soon after you phoned me about it, that your husband wouldn't likely have time to arrange for accommodations for us at the beach; so I had Mr. Oleson do it. And that part of it is attended to already.

MRS. FURMAN. How kind of you! You are so thoughtful! Oh, I'm so anxious! We simply cannot fail to give such kind and thoughtful friends an outing worth while!

POYNER. Ahem! AHEM! Beg pardon, ladies, but can I do anything for you?

MRS. FURMAN. (Haughtily) Why, yes—ah—you might get us some ice water. Aren't you folks thirsty?

POYNER. The fountain's out in the hall. Step out and help yourselves. (Goes on with work)

MRS. OLESON. So very impolite!

MRS. KLEBERG. Why does your husband keep such a man?

MRS. FURMAN. Well, you see, he hasn't had time to make any changes. And maybe he hates to be hard on the poor fellow. (Poyner tears his hair) Sir, can you give us any idea as to how long Mr. Furman will be away?

POYNER. Oh! You wanted that poor shrimp, did you? I guess he'll be back any minute. He said he was expecting—

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, he thought I might come! He was looking for me, the darling!

POYNER. (Growling) Well, naw, he said a LADY might come to see him, but he didn't say anything about a whole flock of hens!—ah—I beg your pardon! I think he's expecting to see a lady here soon, so I suspect he will be here shortly. (Works.)

(Enter Oxford hurriedly, left. He has on hat and carries a little traveling bag.)

OXFORD. Good evening, ladies! Poyner, where are those papers we drew up this morning?

POYNER. Why, I thought you'd gone!

OXFORD. (Impatiently) No. I decided not to go until this next train. But no time for explanations. Where are those papers.

POYNER. Can't say, I'm sure. (Turning to desk and preparing to leave.)

(Oxford goes to desk at right and searches through it. Then to table, center, scattering its contents right and left and mumbling. Poyner calmly puts on gloves and prepares to go.)

POYNER. (At door, left) Come to think of it, Leonard had those papers last time I noticed them this morning just before he went out, and likely as not he put 'em in his pocket. (Exit left, closing door after him.)

OXFORD. Oh, hell! And where's Leonard? (Runs around, looking in the same place over again.)

MRS. OLESON. What an abrupt man! Who is he?

MRS. FURMAN. Can't say. Must be one of Leonard's clients. But—ah—we haven't decided yet how long we can stay away on our outing.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Well, if that storm comes as predicted we can't be gone more than eight days.

MRS. FURMAN. I do wish we could think of something to do besides rowing, swimming, cruising and dancing to give more diversion.

MRS. KLEBERG. Oh, I'll tell you dearie! If you could only stand the expense—get Beidler's Symphony Orchestra!

MRS. OLESON. Charming! If you only could! We've never done that! With that orchestra you'd have the swellest thing this city has had in some time. So appropriate for your first little venture!

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Oh, do that! You must!

MRS. FURMAN. But the expense! Is it an awful lot?

MRS. TRUEBELLE. O, you can! It would add so much to your social prestige—and your husband's show of success. You must!

OXFORD. (Still rummaging) Ladies, could you tell me where Leonard is?

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, you mean Mr. Furman! (Haughtily) He's out just now—just have a seat. He'll be here presently, I suppose. He's very busy.

OXFORD. But I must see him at once! Can you tell me where he's gone?

MRS. FURMAN. Indeed, no! Don't be so impatient. Just have a seat. I'm sure you are not the only one who will be anxious to see him.

OXFORD. Hmmm. Is THAT so!

MRS. FURMAN. Yes. And you'll likely have to wait quite a bit to talk to him after he he gets back, he'll be so busy. (Turning to others) Now, you know, dears, I've a notion to try to do that, but I'll have to speak to Leonard first.

MRS. TRUEBELLE. That's just like the newly rich! But pretty soon you'll be making obligations like that without so much as giving him a thought.

OXFORD. (In a frenzy) Excuse me ladies, for interrupting this pink tea talk, for I've got to make a train. Did that fathead —did Leonard DEAR leave any word as to his whereabouts or anything?

MRS. FURMAN. Why, no. He only left word with the young

man that he was expecting a lady here soon—

OXFORD. Well, he seems to have got a whole parlor full of 'em! (Looks at his watch) Great Caesar! I've got to find those papers! Wonder if he could have put them into the vault? (Exit right back)

MRS. OLESON. What a disagreeable man!

MRS. FURMAN. Yes. That's the objection to Leonard's doing this kind of work. He has to deal with such rough, uncouth men!

(Enter Kitty and Wysong, left)

KITTY. Oh, here you are, folks! I've a surprise for you. You were right about Clyde—ah—Dr. Wysong and me ****

MRS. FURMAN. Engaged! Oh, Kitty! Is it true?

KITTY. Yes. We're so happy!

ALL. Congratulations, Doctor, and best wishes, Kitty!

MRS. FURMAN. Isn't this just lovely—too lovely for anything?

MRS. TRUEBELLE. Oh, I know! How appropriate for our little outing to be in honor of their wed—

MRS. FURMAN. You are always such a resourceful woman! How kind of you to suggest it! The very thing!

(Enter Leonard, left. His wife rushes to him and throws her arms about his neck.)

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, Leonard, darling, let me tell you the news! Kitty and Doctor Wysong are going to be married, and we are planning a little trip for them. We're going to take all these folks out for a week's outing in the "Princess"! You must arrange about the chartering of it right away. Mrs. Oleson has had Mr. Oleson see about our accommodations at the beach hotel already (Leonard gradually sinks down, knees quaking) And, darling, we have a chance of putting on one of the swellest things of the season, if you'll only agree to getting Beidler's Symphony Orchestra!

FURMAN. Heavens! Do you know what it costs to take that orchestra out for a week? Why, Tootsie, at the rate that orchestra charges, we couldn't afford to hear them blow one note!

MRS. FURMAN. And you mean to say you won't get it?

FURMAN. No. And another thing: We couldn't even rent water wings to float across that bay, let alone—

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, Leonard! My heart! Oh, you know what the doctor said! Oh, I feel it coming on again! (Trying to collapse) Would you have your little wife—are you going to be so brutal—

FURMAN. Oh, Tootsie! For God's sake don't look that way! You know I'm not brutal to my little Tootsums—don't ever use that word again! You know I'm not that way!

MRS. FURMAN. No, we'll just tell them that we can't afford to return their favors, and then I'll go coop myself up at home and never go out or have any diversions or anything, and then, and—then—soon you won't have any little wife to bother you—

FURMAN. Don't! Please don't say that! Of course my little Tootsums can have her yachting party, of course her can have anything her wants!

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, you're such a darling husband! ** And the orchestra?

FURMAN. (Almost insane) Yes, and the orchestra, too, of course.

MRS. FURMAN. (Leading him to others) Isn't he the finest husband in the world! He is only too glad to have the orchestra

MRS. TRUEBELLE. You are to be envied, dear! This is going to be the most distinctive event of the year!

(Enter Oxford from right back entrance)

OXFORD. Ah, here you are! (To Mrs. Furman) Madam, if you want to have your pink tea talk, go to a parlor; if you want to weep please go to a cemetery. If you'll allow me a word with Leonard—

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, Leonard! how can you allow that man to insult me that way? Oh, my heart!

FURMAN. Now, Tootsie, sweet, don't let it come on again! Clyde, you please take them to the rest room and wait till I come. (They exit right. He assists his wife to the door.) Now, go in here, pet. I'll attend to him.

MRS. FURMAN. Don't be too hard on him, dear.

OXFORD. (In a frenzy) Now, my dear sir, if you can spare me a moment! I want those papers that we fixed up this morning. I've just three minutes to make that train. Quick!

FURMAN. (Giving papers from pocket) Just a minute, Mr. Oxford. You have insulted my wife, and I want—you—to—I—want—to—to hand in my resignation. (Voice trembles)

OXFORD. Oh, hell! Cut out the grandstand play! Wait until I get back and I'll see about that. Good day! (Exit left)

(Leonard stands a few moments dazedly looking after him; then goes to phone and takes down receiver)

FURMAN. (At phone) Lamar 1732. Yes, please. *** This is Leonard Furman speaking. Mr. Smith, does that life insurance

I have with your company carry double indemnity in case of accident? **** It does? Thank you. *** Oh, no, I just wanted to know. (Returns receiver; then he goes to desk and takes out revolver. He places it in several positions pointing the muzzle toward his heart as though trying to figure out a way in which he might shoot himself accidentally. He puts gun away, shaking his head. Going to left, he gets door stop, brick or piece of iron, places it length of his body from table at center by lying prone on floor. Then he gets on table and stands near edge, as though contemplating falling so that his head will strike the weight. Just as he is holding his breath and closing his eyes for the fall a rap sounds at door at left.)

FURMAN. (Getting down excitedly) Come in.

MRS. WORTHMORE. (Entering left) I'm sorry if I've kept you waiting. I tried to phone you, but I couldn't find your office listed in the directory.

FURMAN. Well, you see MY office is not listed at all. Now, if you'll please state your business. I'm—

MRS. W. Yes, I know you're busy, and I shall therefore be very brief. Not long ago I married a man many years older than myself. For a time he seemed to care for me as I did for him and we were very happy. However, after a few years I noticed that he began looking upon me with suspicion. I tried to get him to tell me the trouble, but he would not. He always seemed ot be too busy to notice me, and pre-occupied when I wanted to talk with him. As he was a business man, I decided that perhaps he thought me too impractical, and I got him to let me have quite a sum of money that I might show him that I had business sense by investing it wisely. I took my cousin, Dr. Wysong, to see him—

FURMAN. Your cousin! Wysong your cousin!

MRS. W. Certainly. Why are you so excited?

FURMAN. Your husband did not know that he was your cousin, did he?

MRS. W. Why, I don't know. I suppose not, though, for the day we went to his office he would not see us, and that night he asked me to leave his house; told me that he was going away, and requested that I apply for a divorce.

FURMAN. Have you done so?

MRS. W. (Tearfully) No-o, not yet.

FURMAN. Have you tried to reconcile him?

MRS. W. Yes. I've written dozens of letters, but they all came back unopened. (Sobbing and handing letters.)

FURMAN. I see. And you want to apply for a divorce?

MRS. W. Yes, I do—since it is his wish—and—and—

FURMAN. Do you want to ask for a division of property?

MRS. W. Yes, I—do—I wouldn't care—I have all I need—only—I believe he's caring for—for some one else, an—I—

FURMAN. You want to keep her from getting it, of course. How much do you want?

MRS. W. Five hundred thousand dollars. Oh, sir, you must get it. I have come to you because I think you are the one most capable of handling the case. I'll pay you anything you want if you'll only get it from him—and her! I'll give you half of it—I—I—don't need it, but I—

FURMAN. (Becoming dignified) Very well, madam, we'll take the case.

MRS. W. Oh, thank you, sir! I feel that you can get it if anyone can. And Clyde, Dr. Wysong, told me that you could advise me in the investment of the money I spoke of—I—want to buy some good oil leases.

FURMAN. Have you made any contract yet?

MRS. W. No. I haven't yet decided what is the best territory. I know so little about it; I'll just risk your judgment on it. Can't you advise me about some property?

FURMAN. Let's see ** Oh, by the way, here is a lease on two thousand acres out a few miles north of town where they are drilling. A friend left it in here today and asked us to sell it for him. He's going to be away. It's the best bargain I know of, if you have the money to take advantage of it.

MRS. W. Oh, fine! I hope I have; how much is it?

FURMAN. Let's see: two thousand acres at $200.00 per acre—four hundred thousand, cash. And if they get oil in that well they are drilling, it will make you millions; then, I guess your husband will say you have a business head.

MRS. W. Oh, that's too lovely for anything! (Writes check) To whom shall I make the check?

FURMAN. Why—er—ah— the party who is selling this did not want his name known, because he is selling it at such a bargain. Just make it out for the amount and I'll fill it in later. (Receives check and transfers lease) All right: thank you.

(Telephone rings at right.)

FURMAN. Yes, this is Furman speaking. *** Yes, I have developments. *** Come right over. *** Good bye.

MRS. W. It is so fortunate that I found you. I'll go now, and you must let me know just as soon as you get action in the

divorce and alimony case. And another thing—

FURMAN. Pardon me for interrupting you, Mrs. Worthmore, but the most important part of our interview is over, and just now I have a client coming over on very important business. So I ask that you go into this room and wait a few minutes. My wife and several others are in there. (Opens door to right) Tootsie, Mrs. Worthmore will come in a few minutes. Don't get impatient, you folks, and soon we'll go.

(Rap at door left, and Worthmore enters hurriedly.)

FURMAN. Come right in, Mr. Worthmore! Things came to a crisis sooner than I expected, and I am glad to hand you your wife's—ah, pardon me—the former Mrs. Worthmore's check for $400,000 for the lease on that two thousand acres of land you have north of the city.

WORTHMORE. What! Do you mean to say you got that much for that wildcat stuff? Why that's robbery, man! Highway robbery! Why, that stuff isn't worth ten cents, actual value!

FURMAN. You said get the money any way we could, and anything is fair in love, war, or the oil game. When a man is selling oil leases he doesn't consider what it is worth; he only considers what the other fellow will pay for it.

WORTHMORE. (Shaking hands) You deserve to keep that whole amount; you did it so nicely.

FURMAN. Only the commission agreed to—

WORTHMORE. Well, I told you I'd give you twenty-five per cent of whatever you got out of that lease.

FURMAN. Pardon me, sir. THIRTY, I believe.

WORTHMORE. Well, hang it, what do I care? That wasn't what I was after. All I wanted was to get it out of her hands.

FURMAN. Yes. And you remember, I was to get ONE-FOURTH of it for getting it away from her; I believe that makes—in all—

WORTHMORE. Fifty-five per cent of the whole thing. (Writing check) Just make it Oxford and Furman?

FURMAN. (Catching himself and swallowing hard) Just make it out to T. L. Oxford, esquire. Thank you. (Putting check under paper weight on table.) And now, Mr. Worthmore, I have another matter to take up with you. Your wife—ah—the former Mrs. Worthmore—has filed suit against you for divorce—

WORTH. Good! The sooner the better! But I have already given my consent, so how can this concern me?

FURMAN. Well, she's asking for one-half million alimony.

WORTH. (Jumping up in rage) Thunderation! She'll have

a happy time of getting it! She'll not get a blamed cent!

FURMAN. Just a minute. Her case is pretty clear. You see, your letter is in her hands telling her you are leaving her, and here are her letters to you asking you for an explanation and a reconciliation. It's a pure case of desertion, and you'll only drag your name into the courts and furnish the big dailies with a new sensational disgrace.

WORTH. What's her price, man?

FURMAN. We can compromise for $500,000. And if it goes to court you will lose, and it will cost you a great deal more than that.

WORTH. Yeaah, if you handle this as neatly as you did that lease I have no doubt I'd lose, all right! Will that satisfy her? How do I know that I'll not be blackmailed every few days for more every time she and that confounded Wysong need it?

FURMAN. Oh, we'll take care of that part of it. Just make out a check and I'll fix up a contract whereby this firm agrees to take care of all subsequent demands made by your wife—ah—pardon me—the former Mrs. Worthmore.

WORTH. Here, take it. I don't mind the money, but that cur of a Wysong!— Was he with her when she called?

FURMAN. Well, no. Not exactly—that is, he came a short time before she did. They're both in the room there now.

WORTH. What! What's that you say! (Drawing revolver from pocket) I WILL furnish the papers with a sensation! (Starting right).

FURMAN. Just hold on. You see Wysong is going to get married right away.

WORTH. Why, she hasn't a divorce yet! Oh, Lord!

FURMAN. Well, you see SHE doesn't need a divorce for HIM to marry my wife's friend and his boyhood sweetheart, Miss Kitty Sheppard.

WORTH. What! WHAT!—

FURMAN. Have a seat, Mr. Worthmore, until I write Mr. Oxford a short note. (Pause, while F. writes rapidly on typewriter. He signs letter and places it unopened by checks on table) And now, I'll introduce you to your COUSIN, Dr. Clyde Wysong, and your cousin-to-be, Miss Kitty Sheppard.

WORTH. My COUSIN! Wysong my cousin! Oh, my poor little wife! I must see you at once! (Starts out right. Furman intercepts him at door. Enter Oxford, unobserved, at left. He hears rest of conversation)

FURMAN. Wait just a minute, please. I want to see her. She was to give us half of that money you just paid.

WORTH. Thunderation man! you have just got a couple of hundred thousand out of me in that double deal a while ago. How much does it take to satisfy you?

FURMAN. Only the amount agreed upon.

WORTH. Well, I haven't got time for that now! I've got to see my wife! Tear up the smaller of those two checks and indorse the other for my wife and keep it. (Exits right.)

(Furman stands looking out right; noise of conversation heard. Oxford advances to table and examines checks and Furman's note. His face relaxes, and he starts to address Leonard, when others enter right. He takes position left front.)

WORTH. Yes, believe me, Oxford has SOME partner!

FURMAN. (Frantic) Tootsie, I must tell you the truth. We can't have this out—I must—this partnership business—You see, I am not Mr. Oxford's partner at all, and we can't afford this trip; we can't afford anything—were penni—

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, Leonard, catch me! It's coming on me again! (Leonard supports her)

OXFORD. (Coming forward) Pardon me ladies—everybody. I want to introduce you to my new partner and superior, Mr. Leonard Furman. (To Leonard) And so you had the checks made out to me, and were leaving without one cent of pay? These your farewell message!

FURMAN. Well, you see, my salary for one day wouldn't amount to much, so just let it go.

OXFORD. Here. I am endorsing this check to you. It's your salary for today, and this is your last day on a salary. (To Mrs. Furman) Madam, you may pull off any kind of social stunt in here you want to!

MRS. TRUEBELLE. We envy you, dear, your good fortune!

KITTY. Come, let's leave them alone. We'll all prepare for an early start on our trip. (Exit all except Mr. and Mrs. Furman, left)

FURMAN. (Calling out left, haughtily) Oh, by the way, Oxford—William—join us in our little outing tomorrow. (To others, as they exit, left) We'll have everything ready, folks. (Exit all but Mr. and Mrs. Furman, left) Now, Tootsie, tell your old hubby that you don't have anything against him because he has been so ugly to you.

MRS. FURMAN. Oh, Leonard! How could you be so cruel

a while ago? Just to humiliate me before our friends, when you knew my heart was so weak?

FURMAN. Now, Tootsie, please forgive me for every time I've been ugly to you, won't you? I have made over $500,000 tonight for my own little Tootsums, but it all doesn't count unless my own little Tootsums gets in a perfectly good humor.

MRS. FURMAN. (Brightening up) Oh, isn't that fine! Now we can have OUR OWN launch that we go in tomorrow and won't have to hire one; it's so common!

FURMAN. But, Tootsie, don't you think we can make out with a hired one? Don't you think it is time we started to begin to try and save a little—

MRS. FURMAN. Now, Leonard! (Sighing) Oh, don't always be so selfish and cruel that way and deny your wife every little pleasure she wants. Oh, how can you be so heartless when you know that every minute may be my last? (Putting hand to heart) Oh-h! I believe it is coming on again! I wish it would, and then —I know you would be glad—

LEONARD. (Falling on his knees before her) Tootsie! Tootsie!! Please don't think that way about me! You know I'm not like that! Sure, my 'ittle Tootsums can have her own 'ittle launch, her can—Only don't think that way about her old, mean, hateful, cruel, old hubby!

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